



*The manner of  
John Shepherd's Escape  
out of the Condemn'd Hole in Newgate.*

A  
NARRATIVE

Of all the  
Robberies, Escapes, &

O F  
JOHN SHEPPARD



Giving an Exact Description of the manner of  
his wonderful Escape from the CASTLE  
in Newgate, and of the Methods he took af-  
terward for his Security.

*Written by himself during his Confinement in the Middle  
Stone-Room, after his being taken in Drury-Lane.*

To which is Prefix'd,

A true Representation of his Escape from the  
Condemn'd Field, curiously engraven on a Cop-  
per Plate.

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The whole Publish'd at the particular Request of  
the Prisoner.

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*The Fifth Edition.*

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1. The first part of the report is a general introduction to the subject of the study. It discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. It also provides a brief overview of the methodology used in the study.

*[Faint, illegible text]*

1900

# JOHN SHEPPARD'S NARRATIVE

OF HIS  
LIFE and ACTIONS, &c.

**A**S my unhappy Life and Actions have afforded Matter of much Amusement to the World; and various Pamphlets, Papers, and Pictures relating thereunto are gone abroad, most or all of them misrepresenting my Affairs; 'tis necessary that I should say something for my self, and set certain intricate Matters in a true Light; every Subject, how unfortunate or unworthy soever, having the Liberty of publishing his Case. And it will be no small Satisfaction to me to think that I have thoroughly purg'd my Conscience before I leave the World, and made Reparation to the many Persons Injur'd by me, as far as is in my poor Power.

If my Birth, Parentage, or Education will prove of Service or Satisfaction to Mankind,



kind, I was born in *Stepney* Parish, the Year *Queen Anne* came to the Crown; my Father a *Carpenter* by Trade, and an honest industrious Man by Character, and my Mother bore and deserved the same. She being left a Widow in the early Part of my Life, continued the Business, and kept my self, together with another unfortunate Son, and a Daughter, at Mr. *Garrett's* School near Great *St. Helen's* in *Bishopsgate* Parish, till Mr. *Keebone* a *Woollen-Draper* in the *Strand*, an Acquaintance, regarding the slender Circumstances of our Family, took me under his Care, and improv'd me in my Writing and Accompts, himself setting me Copies with his own Hand; and he being desirous to settle me to a Trade, and to make my Mother easy in that Respect, agreed with Mr. *Owen Wood*, a *Carpenter* in *Drury-Lane*, to take me Apprentice for Seven Years, upon Condition that Mr. *Keebone* should procure Mr. *Wood* to be employ'd in performing the Carpenter's Work, &c. at a House at *Hampstead*, which he did accordingly, and upon that and no other Consideration was I bound to Mr. *Wood*.

We went on together for about six Years, there happening in that Time what is too common with most Families in low Life, as frequent Quarrels and Bickerings. I am far from presuming to say that I was one of the

the best of Servants, but I believe if less Liberty had been allow'd me then, I should scarce have had so much Sorrow and Confinement after. My Master and Mistress with their Children were strict Observers of the Sabbath, but 'tis too well known in the Neighbourhood that I had too great a Loose given to my evil Inclinations, and spent the Lord's Day as I thought convenient. It has been said in Print that I did beat and bruise my Master Mr. *Wood* in a most barbarous and shameful manner at Mr. *Brist's*, the Saw Ale-House at *Islington*, and that I damn'd my Mistress's Blood, and beat her to the Ground, &c. These Stories have been greatly improved to my Disadvantage. Mr. *Wood* cannot but remember how hard I wrought for him that Day at *Islington*, what Refreshment was offer'd to my Fellow-Servant and my self; the Cause of that unhappy Quarrel is still fresh in my Memory: And as for that of my Mistress, when *Elizabeth Lyon* and her Husband, a Soldier, were quarrelling together in Mr. *Wood's* Yard, I bid them be gone, and threw a small Lath at *Lyon*, which might fall on my Mistress, but she received no Harm as I know of, and if she did, I am sorry for it.

After all I may justly lay the Blame of my Temporal and (without God's great Mercies) my Eternal Ruin on *Joseph Hind*,

[ 6 ]  
a *Better-mould Maker*, who formerly kept the *Black Lyon Ale-House* in *Drury-Lane*; the frequenting of this wicked House brought me acquainted with *Elizabeth Lyce*, and with a Train of Vices, as before I was altogether a Stranger to. *Hynd* is now a lamentable Instance of God's divine Vengeance, he being a wretched Object about the Streets; and I am still far more miserable than him.

It has been said in the *History of my Life*, that the first Robbery I ever committed was in the House of Mr. *Bains*, a *Piece-Broker* in *White-Horse-Tard*; to my Sorrow and Shame I must acknowledge my Guilt of a Felony before that, which was my stealing two silver Spoons from the *Summer Tavern* at *Charing-Cross*, when I was doing a Jobb there for my Master: for which I ask Pardon of God, and the Persons who were wrongfully charg'd and injur'd by that my Crime.

Unhappy Wretch! I was now commenced Thief, and soon after House-breaker; growing gradually wicked, 'twas about the latter End of *July 1723*, that I was sent by my Master to do a Jobb at the House of Mr. *Bains* aforesaid, I there stole a Roll of *Fustian* containing 24 Yards, from amongst many others, and Mr. *Bains* not missing it, had consequently no Suspicion. I offer'd it to Sale among the young Lads in our Neighbourhood



bourhood at 12d. per Yard, but meeting with no Purchasers I consigned the Fustian in my Trunk.

On the 1st of August following, I again wrought in Mr. Baker's Shop, and that Night at about 12 of the Clock I came and took up the wooden Bars over the Cellar-window, so enter'd and came up into the House, and took away Goods to the value of fourteen Pounds, besides seven Pounds in money out of the Till, then shid'd down the Bars again and went off. The next Day I came to the House to finish the Shavers for the Shop, when Mr. Baker and his Wife were in great trouble for their Loss, saying to me they suspected a Woman their Lodger had let the Rogues in, for that they were assur'd the House had not been broken; the poor People little dreaming they were telling their Story to the Thief. I condoling with them, and pretending great Sorrow for their Misfortune. Not long afterwards my Fellow-prentice Thomas acquainted Mr. Wood that he had observed a quantity of Fustian in my Trunk. My Master and I had broke measure, and I being absent from home and hearing Thomas had tattled, in the night-time I broke through a Neighbour's House and into my Master's, and so carried off the Fustian, to prevent the consequence of a Discovery. Mr. Wood rightly concluding I had stoln it from



Mr. *Bains*, sent him word of what had happen'd, who upon overlooking his Goods soon found his Loss, and threaten'd to prosecute me for the Robbery. I thought it was advisable to meet the danger; and therefore went to Mr. *Bains*, bullied and menac'd him, and bid him be careful how he sullied my Reputation, lest he might be brought to repent of it. But this was not sufficient to avert the danger. Mr. *Bains* resolving to proceed upon the Circumstances he was already furnished with; I thought of another Expedient, and acknowledg'd that I had a piece of Fustian which my Mother had bought for me in *Spittle-Fields* of a Weaver; and she, poor Woman, willing to screen her wicked Son, confirm'd the Story, and was a whole Day together with Mr. *Bains* in *Spittle-Fields* to find out the pretended Weaver. In the end, I was forc'd to send back about 19 Yards of the Fustian to Mr. *Bains*, and then the Storm blew over, I related all these Particulars to Mr. *Bains* when he came to me in the *Castle Room*, as well to wipe off the Suspicion from the poor innocent Woman Mr. *Bains's* Lodger, as for his own Satisfaction.

I abruptly quitted Mr. *Wood's* Service almost a Year before the expiration of my Apprenticeship, and went to *Fulham*, and there wrought as a Journey-man to a Master Carpenter, telling the Man that I had served

erved out my Apprenticeship in *Smithfield*. *Elizabeth Lyon* cohabiting with me as my Wife, I kept her in a Lodging at *Parson's-Green*; but Mr. *Wood's* Brother being an Inhabitant in the Town discover'd me, and my Master with Justice *Newton's* Warrant brought me to *London*, and confin'd me in *St. Clement's Round-house* all Night: the next Day I was carried to *Guild-Hall* to have gone before the Chamberlain, but he being gone, I agreed with Mr. *Wood*, and making matters easy got clear of him, and then fell to robbing almost every one that stood in my way. The Robbery at Mr. *Charles's* House in *Moy-Fair* I have confess'd in a particular manner to Mr. *Wagstaffe*, and to many others.

The Robberies of Mr. *Bains*, Mr. *Barton*, and Mr. *Kneebone*, together with the Robbery of Mr. *Pargiter* and two others on the *Hampstead* Road, along with *Joseph Blake*, alias *Blueskin*, I did amply confess before Justice *Blackerby*, Mr. *Bains* and Mr. *Kneebone* being present, and did make all the Reparation that was in my power, by telling them where the Goods were sold, part whereof has been recovered by those means to the Owners.

I declare upon the word of a dying Man, that *Will. Field* was not concerned with *Blueskin* and my self in the breaking and robbing of Mr. *Kneebone's* House, altho' he

has sworn the same at our respective Tryals, and I have been inform'd that by certain Circumstances which *Field* swore to, Mr. *Kneebone* himself is of opinion that he was not concerned in the Fact: But he has done the work for his *Master*, who in the end no doubt will reward him, as he has done all his other Servants. I wish *Field* may repent and amend his wicked Life, for a greater Villain there is not breathing. *Blueskin* and my self, after we had robb'd Mr. *Kneebone's* House, lodg'd the Goods at my Warehouse, a little Stable at *Westminster Horse-ferry*, which I had hired for such Purposes. I was so cautious of suffering any one to be acquainted with it, that even *Elizabeth Lyon* was out of the Secret; but hearing of a *Lock* or *Fence* in *Bishopsgate-Street* to dispose of the Cloth to, *Blueskin* carried the Pack, and I follow'd to guard him, and met the *Chap* at an Alehouse; a small Quantity we got off at a very low Price, which was always not ours, but is the constant Fate of all other Robbers; for I declare that when Goods (the intrinsic Value whereof has been 50*l.*) have been in my hands, I have never made more than ten Pounds of them clear money; such a Discount and Disadvantage attends always the sale of such unlawful Acquirements. *Field* lodging with *Blueskin's* Mother in *Rosemary-Lane*, we all became acquainted,  
and



and being all of a piece made no Secret of Mr. *Kneebone's* Robbery; we told him the manner of it, the Booty, &c. and withal carried him down to the Warehouse at *Westminster*, he pretending to buy the Goods. In a Day or two after, to the great Surprize of *Blueskin* and my self, we found the Warehouse broke open, the Cloth gone, and only a Wrapper or two of no value left; we concluded, as it appeared after, that *Field* had plaid at *Rob-Thief* with us, for he produc'd some of Mr. *Kneebone's* Cloth at my Tryal, of which he became possess'd by no other means than those I have related. I must add this to what relates to Mr. *Kneebone's* Robbery, that I was near a Fortnight, by Intervals, in cutting the two Oaken Bars that went over the back part of his House in *Little Drury-Lane*. I heartily ask his Pardon for injuring him my kind Patron and Benefactor in that manner, and desire his Prayers to God for the forgiveness of that as of all my other enormous Crimes.

I have been at times confin'd in all the Round-houses belonging to the respective Parishes within the Liberty of *Westminster*; *Elizabeth Lyon* has been a Prisoner in many of them also: I have sometimes procur'd her Liberty, and she at others has done her utmost to obtain mine, and at other times she has again betray'd me into  
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the hands of Justice. When I was formerly in St. *Anne's* Round-house, she brought me the Spike of an Halbert, with the Help whereof I did break open the same, but was discover'd before I could get off, and was put into the Dungeon of the Place fetter'd and manacled; and that was the first Time that I had any Irons put upon me. I in Return rescu'd her from St. *Giles's* Round-house soon after; but the Manner of my own Escape from St. *Giles's* Round-House may be worthy of Notice. Having in Confederacy with my Brother *Thomas* a Sea-faring Person, and *Elizabeth Lyon* committed several Robberies about *Clare* Market, and *Thomas* being in *Newgate* for them, impeach'd me and *Lyon*; and the Prosecutors being in close Pursuit of us, I kept up as much as possible; 'till being one Day at the *Queens-Head* Ale-house in *Kingstreet, Westminster*, an Acquaintance call'd *Sykes* (alias *Hell* and *Fury*) a Chairman desir'd me to go thence to an Ale-house at the *Seven Dials*, saying he knew two *Chubs* that we might make a Penny of at *Skittles*, we being good Players: I went with him; a third Person he soon procur'd, and said the fourth should not be long wanting, and truly he prov'd to be a Constable of St. *Giles's* Parish. In short, *Sykes* charg'd him with me, saying I stood impeach'd of several Robberies. Justice *Par-*

ry sent me to St. Giles's Round-house for that Night, with Orders to the Constable to bring me before him again the next Morning for farther Examination. I had nothing but an old Razor in my Pocket, and was confin'd in the upper Part of the Place, being two Stories from the Ground; with my Razor I cut out the Stretcher of a Chair, and began to make a Breach in the Roof, laying the Feather-bed under it to prevent any Noise by the falling of the Rubbish on the Floor. It being about nine at Night, People were passing and repassing in the Street, and a Tile or Brick happening to fall, struck a Man on the Head, who rais'd the whole Place; the People calling aloud that the Prisoners were breaking out of the Round-house. I found there was no Time then to be lost, therefore made a bold Push thro' the Breach, throwing a whole Load of Bricks, Tiles, &c. upon the People in the Street; and before the Beadle and Assistance came up I had dropt into the Church-yard, and got over the lower End of the Wall, and came amidst the Crowd, who were all staring up, some crying, *there's his Head, there he goes behind the Chimney, &c.* I was well enough diverted with the Adventure, and then went off about my Business.

The Methods by which I escap'd from New-Prison, and the *Condemn'd Hold* of Newgate,

*Newgate*, have been printed in so many Books and Papers, that it would be ridiculous to repeat them; only it must be remember'd that my Escaping from *New-Prison*, and carrying with me *Elizabeth Lyon* over the Wall of *Bridewell* Yard, was not so wonderful as has been reported, because Captain *Geary* and his Servants cannot but know, that by my opening the great Gate I got *Lyon* upon the Top of the Wall without the Help of a scaling Ladder, otherwise it must have been impracticable to have procur'd her Redemption. She indeed rewarded me as well for it, in betraying me to *Jonathan Wild* so soon after. I wish she may reform her Life: a more wicked, deceitful and lascivious Wretch there is not living in *England*. She has prov'd my Bane. God forgive her: I do; and die in Charity with all the rest of Mankind.

*Blueskin* has atton'd for his Offences. I am now following, being just on the Brink of Eternity, much unprepar'd to appear before the Face of an angry God. *Blueskin* had been a much older Offender than myself, having been guilty of numberless Robberies, and had formerly Convicted four of his Accomplices, who were put to Death. He was concern'd along with me in the three Robberies on the *Hampstead* Road, besides that of Mr. *Kneebone*, and one other.



ther. Tho' he was an able-bodied Man and capable of any Crime, even Murder, he was never Master of a Courage or Conduct suitable to our Enterprizes; and I am of Opinion, that neither of us had so soon met our Fate, if he would have suffer'd himself to have been directed by me; he always wanting Resolution, when our Affairs requir'd it most. The last Summer, I hired two Horses for us at an Inn in *Piccadilly*, and being arm'd with Pistols, &c. we went upon *Enfield-Chace*, where a Coach pass'd us with two Footmen and four young Ladies, who had with them their Gold Watches, Tweezer Cases and other things of Value; I declar'd immediately for attacking them, but *Blueskin's* Courage dropt him, saying that he would first refresh his Horse and then follow, but he designedly delayed till we had quite lost the Coach and Hopes of the Booty. In short, he was a worthless Companion, a sorry Thief, and nothing but the cutting of *Jonathan Wild's* Throat could have made him considerable.

I have often lamented the scandalous Practice of Thief-catching, as it is call'd, and the publick Manner of offering Rewards for stoln Goods, in Defiance of two several Acts of Parliament; the Thief-Catchers living sumptuously, and keeping of publick Offices of Intelligence: these who forfeit their Lives every Day they breathe,  
and



and deserve the Gallows as richly as any of the Thieves, send us as their Representatives to *Tolbars* once a Month: thus they hang by Proxy, while we do it fairly in Person.

I never corresponded with any of them. I was indeed twice at a Thief-Catcher's *Levee*, and must confess the Man treated me civilly; he complimented me on my Successes, said he heard that I had both an Hand and Head admirably well turn'd to *Business*, and that I and my Friends *should be always welcome to him*: But caring not for his Acquaintance, I never troubled him, nor had we any Dealings together.

As my last Escape from *Newgate* out of the strong Room call'd the *Castle*, has made a greater Noise in the World than any other Action of my Life, I shall relate every minute Circumstance thereof as far as I am able to remember: intending thereby to satisfy the Curious, and do Justice to the Innocent. After I had been made a publick Spectacle of for many Days together, with my Legs chain'd together, loaded with heavy Irons, and stapled down to the Floor, I thought it was not altogether impracticable to escape, if I could but be furnished with proper Implements; but as every Person that came near me was carefully watch'd, there was no Possibility of any such Assistance; till one Day in the Absence of my Jaylors, being looking about the  
the

the Floor, I spy'd a small Nail within Reach, and with that, after a little Practice, I found the great Horse Padlock that went from the Chain to the Staple in the Floor might be unlock'd, which I did afterward at pleasure; and was frequently about the Room, and have several times slept on the Barracks, when the Keepers imagin'd I had not been out of my Chair. But being unable to pass up the Chimney, and void of Tools, I remain'd but where I was; till being detected in these Practices by the Keepers, who surpriz'd me one Day before I could fix my self to the Staple in the manner as they had left me, I shew'd Mr. *Pitt*, Mr. *Rouse*, and Mr. *Parry* my Art, and before their Faces unlockt the Padlock with the Nail; and though People have made such an Opt-cry about it, there is scarce a *Smith* in *London* but what may easily do the same thing. However this call'd for a farther Security of me; and till now I had remain'd without Hand-Cuffs, and a jolly Pair was provided for me. Mr. *Keebone* was present when they were put on: I with Tears begg'd his Intercession to the Keepers to preserve me from those dreadful Manacles, telling him, my Heart was broken, and that I should be much more miserable than before. Mr. *Keebone* could not refrain from shedding Tears, and did use his good

Offices with the Keepers to keep me from them, but all to no purpose; on they went, though at the same time I despis'd them, and well knew that with my Teeth only I could take them off at Pleasure: But this was to lull them into a firm Belief, that they had effectually frustrated all Attempts to escape for the future. I was still far from despairing. The Turnkey and Mr. *Kneebone* had not been gone down Stairs an Hour, ere I made an Experiment, and got off my Hand-Cuffs, and before they visited me again, I put them on, and industriously rubb'd and fretted the Skin on my Wrists, making them very bloody, as thinking (if such a Thing was possible to be done) to move the Turnkeys to Compassion, but rather to confirm them in their Opinion; but though this had no Effect upon them, it wrought much upon the Spectators, and drew down from them not only much Pity, but Quantities of *Silver* and *Copper*: But I wanted still a more useful *Metal*, a Crow, a Chissel, a File, and a Saw or two, those Weapons being more useful to me than all the Mines of *Mexico*; but there was no expecting any such Utensils in my Circumstances.

*Wednesday* the 14th of *October* the *Session* was beginning, I found there was not a moment to be lost; and the Affair of *Jonathan Wild's*



*Wild's* Throat, together with the *Business* at the *Old Bailey*, having sufficiently engag'd the Attention of the Keepers, I thought then was the Time to push. *Thursday* the 15th at about two in the Afternoon *Austin* my old Attendant came to bring my Necessaries, and brought up four Persons, viz. the Keeper of *Clerkenwell-Bridewell*, the Clerk of *Westminster Gate-house*, and two others. *Austin*, as it was his usual Custom, examin'd the Irons and Hand-Cuffs, and found all safe and firm, and then left me; and he may remember that I ask'd him to come again to me the same Evening, but I neither expected or desired his Company; and happy was it for the poor Man that he did not interfere, while I had the large Iron Bar in my Hand, though I once had a Design to have barricaded him, or any others from coming into the Room while I was at work; but then considering that such a Project would be useless, I let fall that Resolution.

As near as can be remember'd, just before three in the Afternoon I went to work, taking off first my Hand-Cuffs; next with main Strength I twisted a small Iron Link of the Chain between my Legs asunder; and the broken Pieces prov'd extremely useful to me in my Design; the Fett-Locks I drew up to the Calves of my Leggs, taking off



before that my Stockings, and with my Garters made them firm to my Body, to prevent their Shackling. I then proceeded to make a Hole in the Chimney of the *Castle* about three Foot wide, and six Foot high from the Floor, and with the Help of the broken Links aforesaid wrench'd an Iron Bar out of the Chimney, of about two Feet and an half in length, and an Inch square: a most notable Implement. I immediately enter'd the *Red Room* directly over the *Castle*, where some of the *Preston Rebels* had been kept a long time ago; and as the Keepers say the Door had not been unlock'd for seven Years; but I intended not to be seven Years in opening it, though they had: I went to work upon the Nut of the Lock, and with little Difficulty got it off, and made the Door fly before me; in this Room I found a large Nail, which prov'd of great Use in my farther Progress. The Door of the Entry between the *Red Room* and the *Chapel* prov'd an hard Task, it being a laborious Piece of Work; for here I was forc'd to break away the Wall, and dislodge the Bolt which was fasten'd on the other Side. This occasion'd much Noise, and I was very fearful of being heard by the Master-Side Debtors. Being got to the *Chapel*, I climb'd over the Iron Spikes, and with Ease broke one of them off for my further Purposes, and

and open'd the Door on the Inside. The Door going out of the Chapel to the Leads; I stripp'd the Nut from off the Lock, as I had done before from that of the *Red Room*, and then got into the Entry between the Chapel and the Leads; and came to another strong Door, which being fasten'd by a very strong Lock, there I had like to have stopt, and it being full dark, my Spirits began to fail me, as greatly doubting of succeeding; but cheering up, I wrought on with great Diligence, and in less than half an Hour, with the main Help of the Nail from the Red Room, and the Spike from the Chapel, wrench'd the Box off, and so made the Door my Humble Servant.

A little farther in my Passage another stout Door stood in my Way; and this was a Difficulty with a Witness; being guarded with more Bolts, Bars, and Locks than any I had hitherto met with: I had by this time great Encouragement, as hoping soon to be rewarded for all this Toil and Labour. The Clock at St. *Sepulchre's* was now going the eighth Hour, and this prov'd a very useful Hint to me soon after. I went first upon the Box and the Nut, but found it Labour in vain; and then proceeded to attack the Fillet of the Door; this succeeded beyond Expectation, for the Box of the  
Lock

Lock came off with it from the main Post. I found my Work was near finish'd, and that my Fate soon would be determined.

I was got to a Door opening in the lower Leads, which being only bolted on the Inside, I open'd it with ease, and then clambred from the top of it to the higher Leads, and went over the Wall. I saw the Streets were lighted, the Shops being still open, and therefore began to consider what was necessary to be further done, as knowing that the smallest Accident would still spoil the whole Workmanship, and was doubtful on which of the Houses I should alight. I found I must go back for the Blanket which had been my Covering a-nights in the Castle, which I accordingly did, and endeavour'd to fasten my Stockings and that together, to lessen my Descent, but wanted Necessaries so to do, and was therefore forc'd to make use of the Blanket alone. I fixt the same with the Chappel Spike into the Wall of *Newgate*, and dropt from it on the Turner's Leads, a House adjoining to the Prison; 'twas then about Nine of the Clock, and the Shops not yet shut in. It fortunately happen'd, that the Garret Door on the Leads was open. I  
stole



stole softly down about two Pair of Stairs, and then heard Company talking in a Room; the Door open. My Irons gave a small Clink, which made a Woman cry, *Lord, what Noise is that?* A Man reply'd, *Perhaps the Dog or Cat;* and so it went off. I return'd up to the Garret, and laid my self down, being terribly fatigu'd; and continu'd there for about two Hours, and then crept down once more to the Room where the Company were, and heard a Gentleman taking his Leave, being very importunate to be gone, saying he had disappointed Friends by not going Home sooner. In about three Quarters more the Gentleman took Leave; and went, being lighted down Stairs by the Maid, who, when she return'd, shut the Chamber-door; I then resolv'd at all Hazards to follow, and slipt down Stairs, but made a Stumble against a Chamber-door. I was instantly in the Entry and out at the Street Door, which I was so unmannerly as not to shut after me. I was once more, contrary to my own Expectation and that of all Mankind, a Freeman.

I pass'd directly by St. Sepulchre's Watch-house, bidding them *Good-morrow*, it being after Twelve, and down *Snow-hill*, up  
*Hol-*



*Holborn*, leaving *St. Andrew's Watch* on my left, and then again pass'd the Watch-house at *Holborn Bars*, and made down *Gray's-Inn Lane* into the Fields, and at two in the Morning came to *Tottenbam Court*, and there got into an old House in the Fields, where Cows had some time been kept, and laid me down to Rest, and slept well for three Hours. My Legs were swell'd and bruis'd intollerably, which gave me great Uneasiness; and having my Fetters still on, I dreaded the Approach of the Day, fearing then I should be discovered. I began to examine my Pockets, and found my self Master of between forty and fifty Shillings. I had no Friend in the World that I could send to, or trust with my Condition. About seven on *Friday* Morning it began raining, and continued so the whole Day, insomuch that not one Creature was to be seen in the Fields. I would freely have parted with my right Hand for an Hammer, a Chisel, and a Punch. I kept snug in my Retreat till the Evening, when after Dark I ventur'd into *Tottenbam*, and got to a little blind Chandler's Shop, and there furnish'd my self with Cheese and Bread, Small-beer, and other Necessaries, hiding my Irons with a great Coat as much as possible. I ask'd the Woman  
for

for an Hammer, but there was none to be had; so I went very quietly back to my Dormitory, and rested pretty well that Night, and continued there all *Saturday*. At Night I went again to the Chandler's Shop and got Provisions, and slept till about six the next Day, which being *Sunday*, I began with a Stone to batter the *Basils* of the Fetters in order to beat them into a large Oval, and then to slip my Heels thorough. In the Afternoon the Master of the Shed, or House, came in, and seeing my Irons, asked me, *For God's sake, who are you?* I told him, "an unfortunate young man, who had been sent to *Bridewell* about a Bastard-Child, as not being able to give Security to the Parish, and had made my Escape." The Man reply'd, *If that was the Case it was a small Fault indeed, for he had been guilty of the same things himself formerly; and withal said, However, he did not like my Looks, and cared not how soon I was gone.*

After he was gone, observing a poor-looking Man like a Joiner, I made up to him and repeated the same Story, assuring him that 20 s. should be at his Service, if he could furnish me with a

D

Smith's

Smith's Hammer, and a Punch. The Man prov'd a Shoe-maker by Trade, but willing to obtain the Reward, immediately borrow'd the Tools of a Black-Smith his Neighbour, and likewise gave me great Assistance, and before five that Evening I had entirely got rid of those troublesome Companions my Fetters, which I gave to the Fellow, besides his Twenty Shillings, if he thought fit to make use of them.

That Night I came to a Cellar at *Charing-Cross*, and refresh'd very comfortably with roast Veal, &c. where about a dozen People were all discoursing about *Sheppard*, and nothing else was talk'd on whilst I staid amongst them. I had tyed an Handkerchief about my Head, tore my woollen Cap in many places, as likewise my Coat and Stockings, and look'd exactly like what I designed to represent, a Beggar-Fellow.

The next Day I took shelter at an Ale-house of little or no Trade, in *Rupert-Street*, near *Piccadilly*. The Woman and I discours'd much about *Sheppard*. I assur'd her it was impossible for him to escape out of the Kingdom, and that the Keepers



Keepers would have him again in a few Days. The Woman wish'd that a Curse might fall on those who should betray him. I continued there till the Evening, when I went towards the *Hay-market*, and mixt with a Crowd about two Ballad-Singers; the Subject being about *Sheppard*. And I remember the Company was very merry about the Matter.

On *Tuesday* I hired a Garret for my Lodging at a poor House in *Newport-Market*, and sent for a sober young Woman, who for a long Time past had been the real Mistress of my Affections, who came to me, and render'd all the Assistance she was capable of affording. I made her the Messenger to my Mother, who lodg'd in *Clare-street*. She likewise visited me in a Day or two after, begging on her bended Knees of me to make the best of my Way out of the Kingdom, which I faithfully promis'd; but I cannot say it was in my Intentions heartily so to do.

I was oftentimes in *Spittle-fields*, *Drury-lane*, *Lewkenors-lane*, *Parkers-lane*, *St. Thomas-Street*, &c. those having been the chief Scenes of my Rambles and Pleasures.



I had once form'd a Design to have open'd a Shop or two in *Monmouth-street* for some Necessaries; but let that drop, and came to a Resolution of breaking the House of the two Mr. *Rawlins's*, Brothers and *Pawn-brokers* in *Drury-lane*, which accordingly I put in Execution, and succeeded; they both hearing me rifling their Goods as they lay in Bed together in the next Room. And though there were none others to assist me, I pretended there was, by loudly giving out Directions for shooting the first Person through the Head that presum'd to stir: which effectually quieted them, while I carried off my Booty; with Part whereof on the fatal *Saturday* following, being the 31st of *October*, I made an extraordinary Appearance; and from a *Carpenter* and *Butcher* was now transform'd into a perfect Gentleman; and in Company with my Sweetheart aforesaid, and another young Woman her Acquaintance, went into the City, and were very merry together at a publick House not far from the Place of my old Confinement. At four that same Afternoon we all pass'd under *Newgate* in a Hackney Coach, the Windows drawn up, and in the Evening I sent for my Mother to the *Sheers* Ale-house in *Maypole Alley* near *Clare-Market*,  
and

and with her drank three Quarters of Brandy; and after leaving her I drank in one Place or other about that Neighbourhood all the Evening, till the evil Hour of Twelve, having been seen and known by many of my Acquaintance; all of them cautioning of me, and wondering at my Presumption to appear in that Manner. At length my Senses were quite overcome with the Quantities and Variety of Liquors I had all the Day been drinking of, which pav'd the Way for my Fate to meet me; and when apprehended, I do protest, I was altogether incapable of resisting, and scarce knew what they were doing to me, and had but two Second-hand Pistols scarce worth carrying about me.

A clear and ample Account have I now given of the most material Transactions of my Life, and do hope the same will prove a Warning to all young Men.

There nothing now remains. But I return my hearty Thanks to the Reverend Dr. *Bennet*, the Reverend Mr. *Purney*, the Reverend Mr. *Wagstaffe*, the Reverend Mr. *Hawkins*, the Reverend Mr. *Flood*, and the Reverend Mr. *Edwards*, for their Charitable Visits and Assurances

stances to me; as also my Thanks to those worthy Gentlemen who so generously contributed towards my Support in Prison.

I hope none will be so cruel as to reflect on my poor distressed Mother, the unhappy Parent of two miserable Wretches, my self and Brother; the last gone to *America* for his Crimes, and my self going to the Grave for mine; the Weight of which Misfortune is sufficient surely to satisfy the Malice of her Enemies.

*I beseech the infinite Divine Being of Beings to pardon my numberless and enormous Crimes, and to have Mercy on my poor departing Soul.*

*Middle-Scene-Room in  
Newgate, Novem. 10.  
1724.*

John Sheppard.

P O S T-

**P O S T S C R I P T.**

After I had Escap'd from the *Castle*, concluding that *Blueskin* would have certainly been decreed for Death, I did fully resolve and purpose to have gone and cut down the Gallows the Night before his Execution.

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**F I N I S.**



1857

I have had the honor to receive  
your letter of the 11th inst. and  
am glad to hear that you are  
well. I am also well and hope  
to hear from you again soon.  
I am, dear friend, very  
truly yours,  
John W. Alden

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John W. Alden

